

Message Text

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SUBJECT:BOSTON GLOBE ARTICLE ON TROOP REDUCTION

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

THE FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MARCH 11 BOSTON GLOBE STORY ON
ALLEGED US PLANS TO CUT MILITARY FORCES ON TAIWAN IN HALF:

BEGIN TEXT: FORD MADE SECRET PLEDGE TO PEKING

US REPORTEDLY WILL CUT TAIWAN FORCE IN HALF -- BY WILLIAM
BEECHER - GLOBE WASHINGTON BUREAU.

WASHINGTON -- PRESIDENT FORD HAS GIVEN A SECRET PLEDGE TO
CHINA TO REDUCE THE AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE ON TAIWAN
BY ABOUT 50 PERCENT OVER THE NEXT YEAR, ACCORDING TO
WELL-PLACED ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS.

THE PLEDGE, THE OFFICIALS SAID, WAS MADE BY MR. FORD TO
VICE PREMIER TENGHSIAO-PING DURING HIS VISIT TO CHINA
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IN DECEMBER.

THE PROSPECTIVE FORCE REDUCTION IS MEANT NOT ONLY TO CONTINUE THE TREND BEGUN BY RICHARD NIXON FOUR YEARS AGO, BUT ALSO TO REASSURE CHINA'S LEADERS THAT THE UNITED

STATES IS DETERMINED TO FURTHER THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS EVEN IF IT ISN'T QUITE READY TO BREAK FORMAL DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH TAIWAN AND ESTABLISH THEM WITH CHINA.

THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS THAT PEKING IS UNHAPPY BY WHAT IT PERCEIVES AS A LACK OF TOUGHNESS BY THE FORD ADMINISTRATION TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION AND BY THE SLOW PROCESS OF RESOLVING THE TAIWAN ISSUE.

AMERICAN MILITARY MEN ON TAIWAN ALREADY HAVE BEEN REDUCED FROM A FORCE OF 8600 AT THE TIME OF NIXON'S FIRST VISIT TO CHINA IN FEBRUARY 1972 TO APPROXIMATELY 2200.

IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE NIXON VISIT, IT WAS PROMISED THAT AMERICAN FORCES WOULD BE PROGRESSIVELY REDUCED "AS TENSION IN THE AREA DIMINISHES."

THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TAIWAN WAS AN INTRINSIC PART OF CHINA AND THAT ITS FUTURE POLITICAL SITUATION SHOULD BE SETTLED BY THE CHINESE.

THE CLEAR, THOUGH UNSTATED, IMPLICATION WAS THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD EVENTUALLY END ITS MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY WITH TAIWAN AND FORMALLY RECOGNIZE PEKING AS THE SOVEREIGN OVER BOTH THE MAINLAND AND TAIWAN AND ITS ASSOCIATED ISLANDS.

BUT SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL IN THE UNITED STATES, SINCE THE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT CONTROLLING TAIWAN HAS BEEN AN ALLY SINCE WORLD WAR II. THE NATIONALISTS FLED MAINLAND CHINA IN 1949 AFTER BEING DEFEATED BY THE COMMUNISTS.

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SENIOR OFFICIALS ARE TRYING TO WORK OUT A FORMULA WHEREBY FULL-SCALE RELATIONS, WITH AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS, MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED WITH CHINA, WHILE PRESERVING UNOFFICIAL YET STILL CLOSE RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN.

SOME AMERICAN OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED THAT WITH CHOU

EN-LAI'S DEATH AND THE 82-YEAR-OLD MAO TSE-TUNG'S INCREASINGLY ILL HEALTH, IT MIGHT BE HARDER TO STRIKE A REASONABLE DEAL WITH POTENTIALLY LESS WORLDLY AND LESS SELF-CONFIDENT SUCCESSORS.

THE DECEMBER PLEDGE TO CUT REMAINING AMERICAN FORCES ON

TAIWAN IN HALF IS CONSIDERED A HOLDING ACTION. IT WOULD SERVE TO SHOW THE GOOD FAITH OF AMERICAN INTENTIONS WHILE GETTING THE ADMINISTRATION PAST THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND INTO POSITION FOR MORE DRAMATIC MOVES, ASSUMING MR. FORD IS RE-ELECTED.

THE NEW REDUCTIONS DOUBTLESS WILL DIMINISH ONE FUNCTION THAT HAS BEEN REGARDED AS OF SPECIAL VALUE TO THE UNITED STATES -- THE WORK OF ABOUT 1000 AIR FORCE PERSONNEL AT SHULINKOU AIR BASE. THEY ARE INVOLVED IN A SUBSTANTIAL EAVESDROPPING AND CODE-BREAKING EFFORT DIRECTED AT CHINA.

IF THE TOTAL AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IS TO COME DOWN TO SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 1000 THIS OPERATION WILL PROBABLY BE CUT BACK SIGNIFICANTLY.

IN ADDITION, THE UNITED STATES PERFORMS THREE OTHER MILITARY FUNCTIONS ON TAIWAN. A MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND ADVISORY GROUP HELPS TRAIN THE NATIONALIST MILITARY FORCES IN THE USE AND MAINTENANCE OF US EQUIPMENT; ANOTHER GROUP IS ASSIGNED TO THE TAIWAN DEFENSE COMMAND TO DEVELOP JOINT CONTINGENCY PLANS IN THE EVENT OF AN ATTACK FROM CHINA; AND A THIRD GROUP PROTECTS AND MAINTAINS A SMALL TACTICAL NUCLEAR AIR FORCE PRESENCE IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR WAR IN THE FAR EAST.

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IN THE PAST, TWO OR THREE F4 FIGHTER BOMBERS HAVE BEEN KEPT ON STRIP ALERT ON TAIWAN AS PART OF THE SO-CALLED "QUICK REACTION ALERT" NUCLEAR FORCES IN THE FAR EAST. THE OTHER TWO SUCH TACTICAL NUCLEAR BASES HAVE BEEN IN SOUTH KOREA AND THE PHILIPPINES.

OFFICIALS DECLINED TO GIVE DETAILS ON WHAT SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS WILL BE CUT BACK IN THE TAIWAN FORCE REDUCTION.

SOME OFFICIALS FEEL IF PEKING WILL PUBLICLY PROMISE NOT TO RESORT TO FORCE TO SETTLE THE TAIWAN ISSUE, IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR THE UNITED STATES TO ABROGATE THE 1954 DEFENSE TREATY DESIGNED TO PROTECT TAIWAN FROM

ATTACK.

UNTIL THE FUTURE OF TAIWAN IS RESOLVED, THE UNITED STATES MIGHT CONTINUE TO SELL IT DEFENSIVE ARMS AND TO MAINTAIN CLOSE TRADE AND POLITICAL RELATIONS.

THE JAPANESE, FOLLOWING THE 1972 AMERICAN SHIFT IN CHINA POLICY, ENDED FORMAL RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN IN

FAVOR OF CHINA. BUT IT SENT RETIRED FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS TO TAIWAN TO PRESERVE CLOSE THOUGH "UNOFFICIAL" CHANNELS FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE.

SOME SUGGEST THE UNITED STATES MIGHT TRY A SIMILAR TACK WITH RETIRED STATE DEPARTMENT AND PENTAGON PERSONNEL AT THE PROPITIOUS MOMENT.

CHINA HAS BEEN ONLY A MINOR ISSUE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. RONALD REAGAN HAS CRITICIZED PRESIDENT FORD FOR "TIMID, VACILLATING" LEADERSHIP TOWARD RUSSIA AND ALLEGEDLY UNDERMINING RELATIONS WITH CHINA. REAGAN HAS ALSO SAID HE IS OPPOSED TO WITHDRAWING RECOGNITION FROM TAIWAN.

ALL THE DEMOCRATIC CONTENDERS HAVE SPOKEN IN FAVOR OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH CHINA, BUT GEORGE WALLACE AND JIMMY UNCLASSIFIED

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CARTER HAVE EXPRESSED OPPOSITION TO WITHDRAWING RECOGNITION FROM THE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT ON TAIWAN.

END TEXT INGERSOLL

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